

board to such an extent as to cover his
chin with
blood,¹

The victor of Al Mahdia was not able
however
to defy the Sicilian power for long. The
politics of
the North African states had no
stability, and a
series of kaleidoscopic changes of
fortune favoured
the intervention and the successes of
the Sicilian
prince, . In the tenth century, the
Fatimites of
Egypt had overrun the whole of the
African coast;
in the eleventh, their underlings in
Tunis, Fez, and
Sicily had repeated the story of the
century before
the Fatimites, and made themselves
free of their
overlords. That process of
disintegration had
favoured Roger the First then;
another upheaval
in Islam favoured his son now. The
Hammadite
princes of Bugia threatened the
Ziridites of Al
Mahdia, and some discontented
tribes, vassals
of the latter, were in secret alliance with
the enemy,
The external pressure and a scarcity of
com made
El-Hasan seek the friendship of Roger,
and obtain
permission to import grain from
Sicily, Finally,
in the course of 1134, Yahya, Prince of
Bugia, de-
spatched an army and a fleet against
Al Mahdia,
where he possessed some partisans,
The Ziridite
prince, whose predecessors had been

from
their original capital in Tunis, was
master of little
more than the former town; he
was obliged
to send to Roger for aid. George of
Antioch was

¹ Amarfi, *E.A.S.*, vol. II, p. 35 »f, AbtMU-Salt
wrote **In** **the**
following regard For Al Mahdia in 1133 see
ante, Chap. IX*